

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

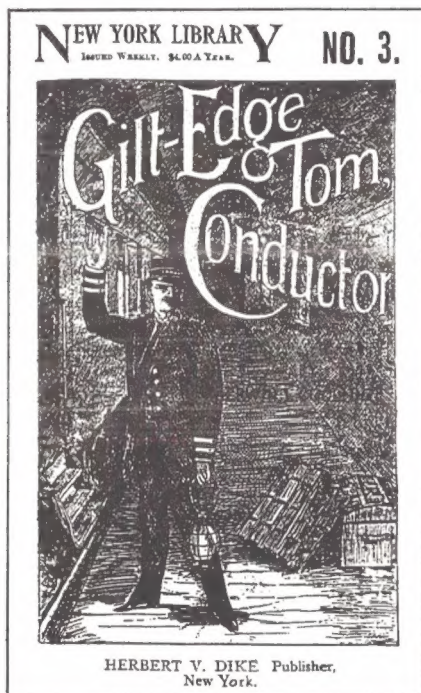
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A GLIMPSE OF CHEAP PUBLISHERS IN ANTEBELLUM BOSTON;  
JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE'S "MARTIN MERRIVALE HIS 'X' MARK"

By Ronald J. Zboray



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# A GLIMPSE OF CHEAP PUBLISHERS IN ANTEBELLUM BOSTON; JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE'S 'MARTIN MERRIVALE HIS 'X' MARK''

By Ronald J. Zboray

The flourescence of popular story weeklies in antebellum Boston and other cities represents one of the most important and yet least documented episodes in the development of American fiction.<sup>1</sup> These papers, with nationalistic titles like *Star Spangled Banner*, *Uncle Sam*, *True Flag*, *Flag of Our Union*, and *Universal Yankee Nation* made an unprecedented commitment to publishing fiction by Americans.<sup>2</sup> The papers reached impressive numbers of readers: average weekly circulations amounted to tens of thousands in the 1840s and a few exceeded 100,000 in the mid 1850s.<sup>3</sup> And they gave a generation of young American writers—including Timothy Shay Arthur, Joseph Holt Ingraham, and Sylvanus Cobb—a chance to hone their skills. Yet, aside from surviving copies of the Boston story papers, very few documents testify to the inner workings of the publishing houses which produced them. The three major publishers, Frederick Gleason, the Williams brothers (Edward, Henry, and George), and Justin Jones left no business records or other papers.<sup>4</sup> The genteel publishing houses of Boston—John P. Jewett, Ticknor and Fields, and Phillips, Sampson, to name a few—naturally had little dealing with the story papers. Many of the authors who later became prominent understandably played down their work in the cheap fiction trade.

One notable exception was John Townsend Trowbridge, who commonly wrote under the pseudonym, "Paul Creyton." Born in 1827 in Ogden, in Upstate New York's Burnt-Over District, he had published some verse as a teenager in local papers, taught school in frontier Illinois, and in 1847, at 20, came to New York to seek his fortune as a writer. With the encouragement of the publisher Mordecai Noah, editor of the *Sunday Times*, he wrote short pieces for the New York press. In 1848, Trowbridge visited Boston at the height of the story paper mania in order to secure contacts among the publishers there. He later wrote in his autobiography: "I found the latitude of Boston so hospitable to those light literary ventures that I prolonged my stay...[to] a permanent residence."<sup>5</sup> Indeed, he continued: "I found the Boston weeklies ready to accept about everything I had to offer, and set gleefully to work to furnish the sort of contributions most in demand. 'Stories, give us stories!' said they all; and stories they had from me from that time forth. From 1847 to the mid-50s he labored in the cheap fiction trade, usually writing for from fifty cents to a dollar for a column. For six months in late 1849 he even became the editor of one of the papers, the *Yankee Nation*, anonymously bankrolled by a periodical dealer, Hotchkiss and Company, and probably by Frederick Gleason, the publisher of a competing paper, *The Flag of Our Union*.<sup>7</sup> After several years of hack work, one of the story paper editors, William Mathews of the *Yankee Blade* made the connections necessary to have a short novel by Trowbridge, *FATHER BRIGHTHOPE*, printed in parts by Phillips, Sampson in 1853. This religious-domestic novel rode the wake of *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN* success that year. Trowbridge followed it with similar fare: *HEARTS AND FACES; OR, HOME LIFE UNVEILED* (1853); *THE DESERTED FAMILY; OR, WANDERINGS OF AN OUTCAST* (1853); and *BURCLIFF: IT'S SUNSHINE AND ITS CLOUDS* (1854).

Trowbridge, however, longed after the reputation and esteem of a



Dickens or a Thackeray and beseeched Phillips, Sampson to let him have a go at a full fledged, intricately plotted novel. In this book, MARTIN MERRIVALE: HIS 'X' MARK (1855),<sup>8</sup> he would draw upon his own experiences in the Boston book trade. According to Trowbridge's later description, the story concerned "a young writer from a rural village going to Boston to find a publisher for his great romance, The Beggar of Bagdad. His adventures among publishers, editors and 'brother authors...' were among the best things in it." Even he had to admit, however, that "the romantic and sentimental parts were the poorest."<sup>9</sup> Indeed, one encounters such stereotypical characters as: the inebriate beggar, Caleb Thorne; his daughter, the Little-Eva clone Alice, a blind, visionary, hallucinating psychic, who weeps incessantly and converts the hard-hearted with the mere touch of her hand; Chesebro' Dabney a 15 year-old country bumpkin and village runaway, physically abused by his mother and destined to become a solid clerk in a merchant house; a confusing array of unfortunate women with ruined reputations; a saintly village minister; and an army of minor characters such as quaint boarding house residents with Dickensian names like Wormlett and Toplink.

The chief character of the story—although at times he seems to vanish without trace—is, of course, Martin himself, a bastard child of a wealthy Colonel Merrivale. The Colonel covers up the secret of Martin's parentage with the lie that the young man is an orphan nephew. Martin's eventual discovery of his true past and the prospect of his future inheritance from his father forms the weak climax of the story.

The enduring part of the novel focuses on the world of Boston cheap publishing. The cheap press of the period acknowledged this verisimilitude: for example, Maturin Murray Ballou (a.k.a. Lieutenant Murray) wrote in his *Pictorial Drawing Room Companion* in 1855: Merrivale's "frequent interviews with the publishers and his subsequent slavery as a newspaper contributor are most feelingly yet comically portrayed. Any man who has been obliged to depend on his pen in this city for his livelihood, will pronounce the pictures in this book unequalled."<sup>10</sup> In short, the book provides an unusual glimpse of Boston cheap publishing—it may be one of the only inside accounts of the trade.

Of course, the narrative was self-serving for Trowbridge and this bias must be taken into account. He was desperately trying to establish himself as a genteel author and naturally wished to put distance between him and the scheming, money grubbing publishers he portrays. His main character plays the role of innocent victim and does not reflect the extent of Trowbridge's involvement in management.

But still, the vexations he registers, however occasionally overdrawn, undoubtedly grow out of experiences common to many fiction hacks of the time. His dreams of the BEGGAR OF BAGDAD being easily snapped up by respectable publishers collapses on his second day in Boston. In fact, the sketch of the submission of Martin's manuscript parallels Trowbridge's own experience with bringing a volume of poems before Phillips, Sampson shortly after the young author arrived in Boston: "With palpitating heart, the ambitious author opened his manuscript on the desk of the mighty man of books. He felt that it was a great moment in his life; the ship of fame was launched upon the wide ocean of his future, to invite its favoring gales, and to brave its storms; and glowing, flushed, and exalted with the inspiration of hope, he made a rather incoherent address, in which the idea conveyed was, that he had chosen the said bookseller before all others, to honor and enrich his house with the publication of the great Romance." (65) The publisher blinks his eyes and tells him to leave the romance until the next week in order to give the house time to evaluate

it. Martin returns to find that the publisher has rejected the manuscript, because the style was "too fine." The publisher explained, officiously: "at the present time...high wrought fictions are not in very great demand. The popular taste is for simple, natural pictures of life." (p. 122)

After blind little Alice has one of her hallucinations in which she sees Martin carrying a cross up a mountain, he resolves to pitch the manuscript, rather than to the flames, to the *Streamer of the Free*, a story paper. The editor runs his eyes over the chapter headings—which include one entitled "How the Seven Robbers Were Outwitted; and What Became of the Supposed Idiot Who Outwitted Them"—and pronounces them "Capital!" but says he has enough material for six months. He dismisses the author but encourages him to submit shorter pieces. Martin tries three other publishers, the last of which reluctantly agrees to look over the manuscript (pp. 129-130), but refuses to pay an advance.

Desperate for money, Martin returns to his boarding house to pen a romantic poem of lost love à la Edgar Allen Poe. The next day he brings it to the *Streamer of the Free* publisher, Mr. Drove. The partially blind Drove misreads Martin's sublime opening line "In this leafy, old Palace / deep within the lonely grove" as "In this leaky old Palace / deep whiten- ing comely grove." Drove calls the manuscript—and not himself—"blind" but offers to publish it with no compensation for the needy author. Martin withdraws his poem but promises some short prose at a dollar a column.

Martin goes to the offices of the *Portfolio* and receives a similar rebuff, although the editor, called Killings but based upon the real Boston comic Ossian E. Dodge, agrees to have Martin write some lyrics for a song for his local panorama. In order to drum up business for his comic routine, he offers Martin money for outrageous fictitious news stories about the Great Killings to be placed in other newspapers. Martin prepares a sketch, "White Hairs and Youthful Tresses; or, The Old Man and His Youthful Bride" for the *Streamer* and after seeing Killings's panorama, writes the song (pp. 143-146). When he asks the comic for payment, Killings holds out for another song and a piece for the *Portfolio* (p. 150).

A few days later, Martin returns to the *Streamer*. The editor, Quintus Quill-driver, who may be based on the publisher Justin Jones, is having a lost weekend. The publisher remarks: "Drunk or sober, it don't make any difference, apparently; though I often think he does his best when he is a good deal over the Bay." (p. 169) The publisher asks Martin to write a leader column "On The Tyranny of Capital" because his rival paper has published a series on the topic. The publisher proposes: "supposing you write a scathing and fiery article, blowing up the rich and siding with the laboring classes?" Then he offers him the chance to write "puffs" for other newspapers; he gives as an example: "*The Streamer of the Free*, for this week, is, by all odds, the best number of that best of papers we have ever seen." The publisher declares that "puff-writing is an art by itself, —d'ye know it? You have to make your paragraphs terse and pointed, 'cause they have to be for at so much a line." (pp. 169-170). Martin tries a few obnoxious puffs for a joke, but the publisher likes them and calls them "the best puff we have had in a month." Martin wonders why the publisher does not write his own puffs, to which the latter replies, "I have my reasons." Martin, according to Trowbridge, "having glanced unconsciously at a letter Mr. Drove was writing, and discovered certain inaccuracies of orthography and construction..., did not question the validity of those reasons." (171)

The drunk editor arrives and accompanies Martin to meet with Killings at the *Portfolio*. Along the way they encounter a Ned Redwort—perhaps the notorious blood-and-thunder novelist Ned Buntline—who writes



each day, according to his own account, eighty pages of foolscap. He says everything in his derring-do tales grow out of his own experiences and shows his scars to prove it. Eventually they reach Killings who says he does not have small change to pay Martin, but manages to come up with devalued New England coin—the first remuneration the young author receives for his work. (pp. 173-179)

In dire need of cash once again, Martin rescues his 'Beggars of Bagdad' from its procrastinating publisher and gives it for serialization in the *Streamer of the Free*. The editor and publisher recommended cutting it by half: "You see, our readers want everything condensed, rapid, dramatic. Take any ordinary novel, and cut it down by one-half, and it'll be twice as good as it was before." (p. 188) They advise him to cut his many florid descriptions. They offer a few more suggestions: "Call it 'Alphiddi, the Disguised Prince, or something of that kind,—startling, you know....' 'The Disguised Prince; or, The Mysteries of Venice,'—how's that?"—to which Martin politely points out that the story is set in Bagdad. The publisher retorts: "You can change it to Venice easy, enough.... All you'll have to do will be to alter the word Bagdad to Venice, and the what-you-call-it river to the something-or-other sea." (p. 189) Martin agrees to the mutilation, for fifteen dollars; he had expected at least one hundred. Trowbridge sums up the episode: "Such was the fate of the 'Beggars of Bagdad.' The great Oriental Romance dwindled into an insignificant novelette; and the author's fame never reached beyond the circulation of the *Streamer of the Free*; and the wealth which had filled the fertile future, in his imaginative brain...became at least a tangible paltry sum, insufficient to pay two month's board." (191) A sadder-but-wiser Martin accepts his fate and begins authoring a steady round of pieces for the cheap story papers, even though, according to Trowbridge, "the task of writing and selling short articles was attended with circumstances exceedingly painful and perplexing in a mind as sensitive" as Martin's. (p. 193) Still he "found himself one of the most popular of the young writers" of his day and eked out a meager living from his pen. According to Trowbridge, "he wrote an article, sold it, received his pay, and that was the last of it." (p. 342)

In his encounters with the Boston literary entrepreneurs, however, Martin's aesthetics had undergone a not-so-subtle transformation that speaks volumes about antebellum writers' stance in a world of intensifying capitalism. When, towards the end of the novel, a Mr. Dillistone, the editor of the *True Standard* reintroduces Martin to the genteel book publisher who had first rejected the *BEGGARS OF BAGDAD*, the author is a changed man. His short explanation of his authorial strategy catches the sympathetic ear of the hardened book publisher: "I think literature should not be frivolous. It should be made to meet the needs of society.... With so much evil in the world to be overcome with the good,—with so much ignorance, wrong and slavery of every kind to be combatted, even in this land of boasted light and liberty,—a writer should not trifle." He now says of the *BEGGARS OF BAGDAD*, "it was mere trash." (p. 345) Even the book he eventually writes for the publisher displeases him. "I am almost ashamed of the whole affair," (p. 363) and he says that he is glad he used a pseudonym.

This same self-effacement reemerges at the climax of the story when Martin regains his patrimony. "The 'X' Mark" of the title turns out to be a birth mark in that shape on Martin's neck—supposedly a fleshly mirror of a gold cross that his father gave his unfortunate mother immediately before their break. But the 'X' hovers over Martin throughout the novel, as a kind of rejection by the author of his own creation.

He finds redemption in the singular act of the saintly woman he is destined to marry, Margaret, the sister of the local minister. She provides a lesson to Martin (and to Trowbridge) in audience building, when she encounters an orphan boy, crying wildly because his schoolmates set upon him. "The boys plagued me—'cause they said my mother an't my mother—she found me in a poorhouse," the boy whimpers. Margaret returns and tells each of the "offenders how sorry she was to hear what they had done"—she weeps and they all, out of shame, join her. For Martin, the "incident...was of dearer account than the story of his country's freedom"—an implicit rejection of the flag waving bombast of the Boston story papers. Martin resolves that he will "labor in the fields of humanity... No fear of prejudice, no low ambition, no tempting bait of luxury, shall turn me from my purpose...and this work will be sweeter to my soul than the joys of princes or the dreams of lovers." (p. 381).

A few moments later when he meets up with his newly discovered father, a haughty politician passes by. His father introduces him as his son—and the visitor smiles salaciously but then, on second thought "serenely." For Martin, "the incident was symbolical and prophetic. Thus the world received our hero: first with a smile of derision, and then with genuine and cordial esteem. And thus Martin met the world: first with a blush, then with the serenity of conscious truth." (p. 383) At the close of the book, Martin Merrivale and John Townsend Trowbridge merge, as the author writes: "Ah, Could the reader know with what emotions...comes from the heart of him who hath written a book, not for fame, still less for fortune, but all for love." (p. 384)

Like Margaret with her mission to the savage schoolboys, Trowbridge had told those who abused him in his struggles as a young author how sorry he was that they had done what they did to him—that somehow by revealing the worst of a nascent industrial capitalism—that pitted all against all in the selfish drive for wealth—thoughtless people would come to their senses. In this sense, Merrivale stands near the head of a long line of writers who had to survive and were ultimately changed by the insipid ironies of literary entrepreneurship—and who then go out with a mission to redeem their oppressors and their audiences.

The two may be identical, of course, as only the more darkly perceptive American writers have discerned. Melville expressed this message with all due concision in his account of the gilt-edge barber's pasteboard on his ship of fools, the *Fidelio*, in his *CONFIDENCE MAN* (1857). The sign which appeared consistently throughout a book in which deceit is ubiquitous, read simply, "No Trust."

Trowbridge and many popular writers after him—whether out of self-delusion, self-interest, or lack of sensitivity—would beyond all reason continue to trust a system that injured the integrity of their vision. At seventy-five, Trowbridge looked back on his life and reiterated a poem he offered to the world on his fiftieth birthday. "I keep some portion of my early dream; brokenly bright," he wrote, "like moonbeams on a river."<sup>11</sup> In a more prosaic mood, he concluded: "Not that I ever would have divorced myself from the Muse, but I would have kept her the mistress of the ménage, not the maid." (p. 459)

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The best source on story papers remains Mary Noel, *VILLAINS GALORE... THE HEYDAY OF THE POPULAR STORY WEEKLY* (New York: Macmillan, 1954). Some individual firms are covered in Madeline B. Stern, ed. *PUBLISHERS FOR MASS ENTERTAINMENT IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980).



<sup>2</sup> This at a time when many of the Philadelphia and New York papers were content to reprint cheap European novels. Indeed, the Boston story paper publishers were responsible for about half of the American-authored novels published in the three cities during the later 1840s. See Lyle Wright, *AMERICAN FICTION: A CONTRIBUTION TO A BIBLIOGRAPHY, 1774-1850* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1969).

<sup>3</sup> Noel, 33; one story paper editor estimated that each copy sold represented ten readers. See *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion* 1 (3 May 1851): 13.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Gleason published *The Flag of Our Union* (1846) and about half a dozen other weeklies, including *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion* (1851). The Williams brothers began their *Uncle Sam* in 1841, the *Yankee* in 1843, the *Weekly Omnibus* 1847, the *Flag of the Free* in 1848. Justin Jones was the publisher of the *Star Spangled Banner* (1846) and several other papers before he sold out to Street & Smith in 1859.

<sup>5</sup> John Townsend Trowbridge, *MY OWN STORY, WITH RECOLLECTIONS OF NOTED PERSONS* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1903), 132.

<sup>6</sup> *IBID.*, 135-136.

<sup>7</sup> *IBID.*, 149-153. Gleason probably was the silent partner because in 1849 he brought out several of Trowbridge's short pieces in book form.

<sup>8</sup> Published in Boston by Phillips, Sampson and in New York by J.C. Derby. Page references here are to the undated, unrevised postbellum edition by Hurst & Company (New York). Trowbridge would go on to carve out a modest but respectable career as an author of anti-slavery books, then as a contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly*, and as the editor of the juvenile magazine, *Our Young Folks*, and the related JACK HAZARD series.

<sup>9</sup> Trowbridge, *MY OWN STORY*, 205.

<sup>10</sup> "John Townsend Trowbridge, Esq.," *Ballou's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion* (1855): 268.

<sup>11</sup> *MY OWN STORY*, 462.

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## FREDERICK NELSON LITTEN'S TRIBUTE TO THE U. S. ARMY AIR CORPS: THE JIMMIE RHODES STORIES

By David K. Vaughan

Although most readers of juvenile books might not realize it, the air arm of the United States Army (forerunner of today's U. S. Air Force) has received extensive treatment in series books. Beginning with the onset of World War I and continuing through World War II, aviation-minded youths seldom lacked for books about Uncle Sam's Army air forces. The authors who wrote these series books had widely varying amounts of flying experience; some of them were pilots. Others probably never set foot in an airplane. But regardless of their flying experience, they all contributed to the image of army aviation as a professional, mission-oriented agency staffed by dedicated, courageous, and highly skilled pilots.

The first series about army flying was Horace Porter de Hart's *OUR YOUNG AEROPLANE SCOUTS* series (12 books published from 1915 to 1919); however, his *AEROPLANE SCOUTS* did not officially join the Air Service until the last two volumes, and his stories lack accuracy. The next series to appear was Charles Amory Beach's *AIR SERVICE BOYS* (6 books pub-

lished from 1918 to 1920), and although it was the first series devoted to Air Service operations, it too, lacked true historical authenticity.

The next series to appear was Crispin Sheppard's DON HALE books (4 books, 1917 to 1919). As in the AEROPLANE SCOUTS series, Don Hale began his military career in another line of work (the ambulance corps) and joined the Air Service in the last two volumes. Like de Hart, Sheppard was clearly not a pilot, although he does seem to have had some flying experience, according to details in the stories. The next series is Lawrence LaTourette Driggs's ARNOLD ADAIR, AMERICAN ACE (3 books, 1918, 1922, 1930). Driggs was an American journalist who reported on the activities of the Lafayette Escadrille and the first American Air Service units to see combat (the 94th and 95th Aero Squadrons, for instance); an article by Driggs appeared in the January, 1918, issue of *National Geographic* (an all-aviation issue). Although he was not a pilot, Driggs had flown in some of the allied combat aircraft and was familiar with actual combat operations, details that show clearly in his first two books. But Arnold Adair, although an American, is involved in Air Service flying only in the final volume, ON SECRET SERVICE.

The next series featuring Air Service activities is the FRANK COBB AVIATOR series (3 books, all published in 1921). This is not really a series, however, as each of the books contains different characters, different locales, and different types of flying, although all involve army flying or flyers to some degree. The first really authentic air service series is Thomson Burtis's RUSS FARRELL series (5 books from 1924 to 1929); Burtis followed that series with another series involving Air Service pilots, the REX LEE series (11 books, 1928 to 1932). Burtis was an army pilot during World War I but never flew in combat. His stories are directly about Air Service flying. Another series, also written by a pilot, was one of the best; it was Hap Arnold's BILL BRUCE books (6 books, all 1928). Arnold had even more flying experience than Burtis, and his books reflect that range. I have written elsewhere about the merits of the Burtis and Arnold books (*Dime Novel Roundup*, October, 1989, February, 1990). But even as Arnold and Burtis were concluding their adventures about Air Service flying, one more brief but excellent series appeared; it was Frederick Nelson Litten's JIMMIE RHODES sequence of books (3 books, 1929, 1933, 1935).

Although Frederick Nelson Litten wrote over thirteen aviation books for older boys, from his first book in 1929 to his last in 1951, he is not considered a series book author. Litten is not mentioned in either the Harry Hudson Bibliography nor in the University of South Florida update. This exclusion is probably justified, because more often than not, Litten featured a new protagonist in his flying stories. But not always. Two names are featured in more than one of his books; one is Johnny Caruthers, air cargo pilot, and central figure of five books; the other is Jimmie Rhodes, U. S. Army Air Corps pilot, and central figure of Litten's first three flying books: RHODES OF THE FLYING CADETS (1929); RHODES OF THE 94TH (1933); and RHODES OF THE LEATHERNECKS (1935). These three books are noteworthy because they provide an accurate picture of the lives of Air Corps pilots in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and because they set the pattern for subsequent Litten heroes, pilots, and narrative style.

The first book in Litten's Air Corps trilogy, RHODES OF THE FLYING CADETS, is as much a primer on the experiences of a young cadet learning to fly in the Air Corps as it is a collection of mystery stories. The book opens with Jimmie Rhodes and several of his young cadet friends arriving at Brooks Field in the hot Texas sun and dust after a ride from San Antonio, five miles away. Rhodes no sooner steps off the bus than he



rescues the pilot of a crashed aircraft, a pilot who gives him a mysterious message about smugglers crossing the border. Rhodes is clearly cut out to be a military pilot, for he has attended the Virginia Military Academy.

As soon as Rhodes arrives in the barracks he learns the meaning of such terms as "dodos," "gigs," "tours," "AWOL," "GI," and so on. Jimmie becomes familiar with the Ruggles "Orientator," a primitive version of a flight simulator, and is given a quick overview of the year-long pilot training program by one of the earlier arrivals: "You see, the Year's divided; four months on PTs, preliminary training ships; they call that the "A" Stage. Then if you pass, you go to "B" Stage—four months on DeHavillands [DH-4s]. Eight months finishes you here at Brooks, and then you go to Kelly [Field] for the last four. Learn to be a bombardment pilot, or an "Observer," or fly with the Attack or Pursuit." (20)

Rhodes learns that his total flying time in the program will amount to about 250 hours [almost exactly the same amount of time I received in my Air Force pilot training program 35 years later], and that if he completes the program successfully, without "washing out," he will be commissioned a second lieutenant.

Rhodes is a natural pilot, possessed of innate skill. Even though he cracks up the airplane on his first solo attempt, he rescues a wounded pilot during a forced landing on his second, successful solo, and later, during his check ride, saves the aircraft from a serious accident when the propellor separates from the engine and strikes the instructor pilot with whom he is flying. When he lands on his cross-country flight, he briefly assists a local circus.

Later, after he advances to "B" Stage, flying DH-4s, he helps to stop a passenger train before it reaches a washed-out bridge. Eventually Rhodes successfully completes "B" Stage of his flying training and proceeds to the coveted "Pursuit" section of advanced flying at Kelly Field. While flying AT-4s in the Pursuit section, he assists in the making of a movie for a Hollywood producer and eventually helps to break up the border smuggling gang that he first learned of when he arrived at Brooks.

RHODES OF THE FLYING CADETS is successful at blending both flying action and elements of mystery, but the details of flying at Brooks and Kelly Field are especially interesting. The accounts of training aircraft, of their "feel" in the air, of the equipment they carried, and of the many flying maneuvers themselves, are accurately and carefully presented. We learn as much about what flying training in 1928 might have been like such as surely as if we had been there ourselves.

This effect was not achieved accidentally. The author, Frederick Nelson Litten, was not a pilot; he was just becoming a successful short story writer. But he was able to obtain the full cooperation of officials in the U. S. Army Air Corps, who allowed him to participate in several training flights in the program, and who, if the dust jacket writeups are to be believed, even allowed Litten to fly solo. One photograph shows him dressed in flying gear and helmet, standing next to the wing of a PT training ship (the "A" Stage training aircraft), with a caption (in AIRMEN OF THE AMAZON) reading "appears above after first solo flight in old #325. He's wondering how he ever got her down, and holding onto the wing to make sure it won't fall off." According to the dust jacket on THE KINGDOM OF FLYING MEN, Litten was "sent to a U. S. Air Training Center, going through cadet training, and learning to fly at the age of 36."

Frederick Nelson Litten was initially trained as a mining engineer, working in that profession for 18 years before switching to writing. His engineering training and experience must have served him well when he began to write of the technical world of flying. His experience as an en-

gineer must also have taught him that there was no substitute for experience if he wished to write convincingly of flying experiences. After the success of his Rhodes books, he began to write one book a year, but first obtaining practical experience of the locations and conditions about which he wrote. Early in his writing career he was assigned as assistant editor of *American Boy* magazine, where many of his stories were published. In 1939 he joined the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, eventually becoming chairman of the fiction department.

Evidently the U. S. Army continued to assist Litten's efforts to gain a realistic perspective on Air Corps flying for, according to information provided on the dust jacket of *RENDEZVOUS ON MINDANAO*, in 1931 he received "many flights to Army operational fields," which supplied background information for his next books, *RHODES OF THE 94TH*.

Most of the adventures of *RHODES OF THE 94TH* take place near Selfridge Field, northeast of Detroit, Michigan, which was the home of the 94th Squadron, one of the most famous American squadrons to fly in World War I. When Rhodes joins the squadron, it is equipped with P-1 pursuit ships, fixed-gear biplanes. Rhodes's first challenge in joining the squadron is to prove himself to some of the older pilots, who have heard of his reputation from flight school and are determined to puncture his pride. But once again Rhodes matches his antagonists and earns their respect.

There are many flying adventures included here as well, adventures that involve the unit in traveling in the area of southern Michigan and northern Ohio. Rhodes is involved in the capture of a renegade enlisted man in Bad Axe, Michigan, and later helps to lead his fellow pilots to safety when fog along the Lake Erie shore reduces visibility as they are returning to Selfridge after performing in an air show in an Ohio town. Litten's choice of Selfridge Field was due to historical fact and to personal convenience, for Litten worked out of Chicago for most of his writing career, and the relative nearness of Detroit was clearly an asset.

The longest adventure in the book comes when the squadron is dispatched to fly from Selfridge to Seattle in the middle of winter, across the northern states. Here the attention is focused on the struggles of the men in the squadron to ensure that their aircraft are able to remain airworthy in the harsh winter weather, landing on frozen lakes, flying in spite of snow and cold weather. This adventure was based on fact, for in 1930 units from Selfridge Field actually did fly from Detroit to Spokane, Washington, to see if aircraft and aircrew could perform in harsh winter weather. This was an especially challenging task, for the aircraft were open-cockpit biplanes and were not really designed to operate in extreme weather conditions.

In the book, Jimmie Rhodes is one of the few who successfully fly to Seattle. Litten tells a good and factual story about the hazards and challenges faced by the pilots flying in snow and cold. Their route of flight takes them from Detroit to St. Ignace, Michigan; to Duluth, Minnesota; to Minot, North Dakota; Glasgow, Montana; and Great Falls, Montana. After reaching Seattle, Rhodes is given permission to fly south to San Francisco to visit an old flying buddy, and flies on a Navy exercise.

Rhodes returns with his unit to Selfridge, where he attends gunnery school at a location called Camp Skeel, located just west of Osceoda, Michigan (my home town), and today known as Wurtsmith Air Force Base. Here he encounters a mysterious black biplane, which has been involved in a number of bank robberies. Rhodes disables it by shooting it out of the sky above the sandy beaches of Lake Huron, at the east edge of the town, an event that would have made big news in the local paper had it actually occurred. The book concludes with two adventures along the Gulf Coast,



again involving Jimmie Rhodes's aerial skill in landing in tight spots and using his aircraft to assist those of his squadronmates in tight places.

RHODES OF THE 94TH provides a reasonably realistic overview of representative flying activities of the front line units of the Air Corps in the early 1930s, when they were equipped with small numbers of aircraft that were, for the most part, ill-equipped to deal with rough weather or long use. Once again, Litten's direct personal experience with Air Corps units lends the book an unmistakable flavor of truth. But the increasingly contrived plots begin to suggest that Litten's creative energies in the Jimmie Rhodes stories are beginning to wane.

The third book in the Jimmie Rhodes saga, RHODES OF THE LEATHERNECKS, is not so much about the Air Corps as it is about the Marines as the title indicates. Litten had once again obtained military support in his effort to experience yet another military flying situation, this time with Marine flying units in Haiti and Santo Domingo, elements of which he flew with in 1933. In RHODES OF THE LEATHERNECKS Rhodes is placed on temporary duty with the flying branch of the Marine Corps in Haiti, as they attempt to provide flight instruction to local Haitians in support of the Haitian government. Although the plot is interesting and is based on historical fact, the episodes involving Jimmie Rhodes's flying skills and the intrigues on the island are more and more fanciful, and farther removed from real-life military flying, even in Haiti, than in his previous novels. Even in his choice of settings, in which the U. S. Army Air Corps played no role, we can see Litten exhausting his fund of Army experiences. After Litten ends his Jimmie Rhodes stories, no more series books about the Army Air Corps are written, at least until the onset of World War II six years later. But then the Air Corps flies again in the series books of R. Sidney Bowen (the RED RANDALL stories) and Al Avery (Rutherford G. Montgomery) and his YANKEE FLIER series.

So it is no surprise that Jimmie Rhodes ends his career at the point, as Litten in his remaining stories turns to an aspect of flying—air cargo transport—that gives him the kind of geographical and fictional breadth that he needs to deliver the kinds of stories he prefers. But the spirit of Jimmie Rhodes lives on in every subsequent flying book that Litten wrote, for nearly every main character in the subsequent stories—Johnny Caruthers, Salty Starr, Joe Tyson, Sam Moody, Steve Ames, Cort Grayson—has become a pilot by flying first for the military services before switching to civilian flying. And although Litten creates Navy and Marine backgrounds for some of his pilots, the U. S. Army Air Corps has trained the most. Jimmie Rhodes makes one final appearance in Litten's AIR MISSION TO ALGIERS (1943), in which he appears only as a "Major Rhodes." He is a secondary character in that novel with little hint given of his earlier flying career. But it is instructive that in a book written at the height of World War II, Jimmie Rhodes should reappear to help direct the flying activities of the men involved in waging the war in the air. But this urge is typical of many of the characters created by Litten; once having invested significant energy in their creation and character development, he appears determined not to abandon them. They continually reappear to populate the flying worlds of his books, which could be truly said to be, as the title of one of his later books so truly and imaginatively puts it, THE KINGDOM OF FLYING MEN.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am seeking copies, photostats, or microfilm of Captain Mayne Reid's periodical, *Onward*, (New York). Also books and other Mayne Reid material.

BOB CURTIS, 407 W. STAYTON, VICTORIA, TX 77901

## LETTERS

Received my latest *Dime Novel Roundup* and read it from cover to cover in one evening. I have plenty to read, but that always is the first one I start reading.

I celebrated my 86th birthday in January and am in fairly good health, considering the minor ailments which accompany old age. I keep busy reading and watching the news on TV, but my only regret is that I never get caught up on my current reading to enjoy some of my old issues of *Wild West*, which was always my favorite in my younger days—and I have quite a collection of them.

Sincerely,  
Walter W. Humberger

\* \* \*

Thanks very much for the extra *DNRs*. I am glad to have them, as I will give one to each of my sons so they can see what I was doing when they were just kids.

It doesn't seem possible that I wrote that piece, "Merriwell vs Fearnot," for *Fries* 63 years ago (when I was 28). I am glad to see it again and check up on Merriwell history.

Those were the days!

Best wishes,  
Ralph P. Smith

\* \* \*

I think we all owe a big debt to Victor Berch and his revelation of a previously unknown Alger pseudonym—Harry Hampton, A. B.—as revealed in *Dime Novel Roundup* just a year ago this spring. I'm surprised and disappointed too, that later issues of *Dime Novel Roundup* did not carry a multitude of letters from grateful Horatio Alger Society members who also are on your mailing list. Berch—like Pachon—has been so active to share his findings with us.

Also, it really warmed the cockles of my heart to read Prof. John Ernest's Alger article in the August issue. I'm happy to know that there are some critics who do not stoop to "throwing stones at the great" to gain a fleeting moment of attention.

Paul J. Miller

\* \* \*

It was nice to see Alger's RAGGED DICK treated as a worthy contributor to American thought by creating "clear cultural patterns from an increasingly complex world—" as it was in Prof. John Ernest's treatise. I note that your paper in San Antonio on the influence of American dime novels in foreign countries followed this and I hope you will put this in the *Roundup* some time in the future.

Jack Barker

NOTE: The article on foreign dime novels will appear soon.

\* \* \* \* \*

## A DIME NOVEL COLLECTOR'S BOOK SHELF

YESTERDAY'S FACES. A Study of series characters in the early pulp magazines. Volume 5 of DANGEROUS HORIZONS, by Robert Sampson. This 5th volume of Mr. Sampson's excellent series describes the adventure series characters in the adventures pulps such as: *Adventure*, *Short Story*, *Top Notch*, *Argosy*, *Popular*, and many others. Highly recommended.



HORATIO ALGER; OR, THE AMERICAN HERO ERA, by Ralph D. Gardner. This bbook, originally published by Wayside Press, is being reprinted again, this time by Amereon House, Box 1200, Mattituck, NY 11952. The price is \$25. It can also be ordered from the Secretary of the Horatio Alger Society, Carl Hartmann, 4907 Allison Dr., Lansing, MI 48910. The original edition is selling at premium prices if one can find it.

\* \* \* \* \*

### RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES CONCERNING DIME NOVELS/SERIES BOOKS

BOY INVENTOR MOVES SWIFTLY INTO THE '90S, by William A. Davis. Article in *Boston Globe*, June 12, 1991. Reviews the TOM SWIFT stories introducing the new series being published by Simon and Schuster.

\* \* \* \* \*

### THE SECRET LIFE OF MARY NESTOR

By Jack Dizer

I believe it is well proven that Mary Nestor served in the U. S. AEF in World War I under the guise of Nippy Weston, a famous Battle ace. It is a strange story and deserves to be better known.

Many years ago I became a Commander in the National Organization of Battle Aces. That does not mean I became a hero at the same time, except in my own mind. It meant that as a kid I had pored over and collected G-8 and his Battle Aces and could (and would) recite ad nauseum the exploits of my World War heroes G-8, Bull Martin, and Nippy Weston. Somehow I knew that Bull had been a football hero at Syracuse University, and former All-American, that G-8 was a mysterious and highly placed mastermind in the Allied Forces and that Nippy Weston who flew Spad number 13 was "a small and wiry sleight-of-hand artist, whose tricks and taunts flim-flammed both the enemy and Bull." But I really knew little else.

Time went on. I spent some years in the Navy in World War II and later in the Korean War and my mind was now centered on Tom Swift and his friends. This is a sign of maturity. In my study of the epics I noticed gaps in the chronology. Mary Nestor would disappear and reappear. This didn't bother me much since she was a girl and could disappear completely as far as I was concerned but it bothered better students of the chronicles, particularly the late John F. Sullivan. John had wide ranging interests including service at the national level of the Boy Scouts and was recognized as the leading authority on Percy Keese Fitzhugh. It turned out that he had also learned more about the World War I G-8 flyers than I would have believed possible.

About 16 years ago John published an article in the magazine *Xenophile* called "Nippy Weston: Girl Flyer." The article shows John at his deductive best and deserves wider circulation. It is reprinted, slightly edited, as follows:

### NIPPY WESTON: GIRL FLYER

By John Sullivan

As an eager reader of G-8 and His Battle Aces during the 30s, I was hit right between the eyes to learn that Nippy Weston, one of the Aces, was a female!! Now, before I get boiled in oil by the fans of the Master Spy, let me qualify this remark. I myself first scoffed at the idea. The primary source for this information was my Scoutmaster, a former First Lieutenant, William T. Barry, who served in the 2nd Battalion 5th Marines, and who had hammered his way up the long axis at Belleau Wood.

It was at Camp Manning in Andover, Massachusetts, that our Troop #1 from Malden held its weekend camping trip. At the glowing campfire, after ghost stories were ended and taps sounded, most of the Scouts were drifting towards their sacks, when Uncle Bill, as we called Mr. Barry, spoke to me: "I noticed today that you had the pulp magazine G-8 with you." "Get it every month," I replied. "Good fiction." "I followed G-8 during the war, as a matter of fact he crashed his plane near my outfit." "G-8 a real person!!!" I gasped. "Yep, Bob Hogan's sagas about him and the German war machine were sort of a farce, but Hogan used real people in his settings." He paused and kicked a loose chip into the fire. "You know Hogan served in the Air Service during World War I, of course." I hadn't, but I nodded, wanting to hear more. So, Bill related how on June 13, 1918, a huge Jerri zeppelin appeared in the West and in the clearest of sky he watched it attacked by a single Spad that came up upon its stern with guns-a-blasting. Suddenly, a figure with a hose appeared on a rear platform and zapped a sticky substance into the path of the heroic attacker. Like a fly hit with Flit, the Spad plunged earthward.

Bill watched it recover a bit at 500 feet and mush right down into a wheat field. At that time, the German IV Corps struck the Gyrenes with a storm of artillery and mustard gas. Uncle Bill, in moving towards a hunting lodge held by the Germans, spotted the Spad lying at a crazy angle, with the pilot feebly trying to get out of the cockpit, sans a gas mask, and a cloud of yellow death rolling in a compact bundle to him. Hustling a gas mask from a dead boche, Bill sped to the plane, and finding its pilot in a blue funk slapped on the gas mask and eased the man to the ground where they watched the hateful cloud dissipate. It was then that Bill noticed the block letters on the wing -G-8-. He thought at the time it was fairly stupid for the master spy to advertise his presence, but then Boboko, Richtofen, and the Little Stork, all did this and he figured it went along with their ego and their image.

G-8 was out of his head and his uppermost rantings were about Nippy Weston being a female, and how the hell had she passed the rigid A.E.F. physical, and how foolish he was going to look. He was so angry about the recent disclosure that he mentioned court martial for Nippy, and even on a rougher note was going to replace Nippy with the Red Falcon.

Being of a curious nature and finding a lull in the vicious battle, Bill checked the liquid that was zapped at the plane. It was pure clocolate syrup that had clogged the motor and flaps. Hogan passed up the tale of this saga, as it outdid even his own imaginative world of the weird Hun's Juggernauts.

Mr. Barry died in 1939 as a result (even at that late date) of mustard gas. The clues he'd discovered to Nippy's alter ego were as follows:

1. She was mentioned quite prominently in a series of juvenile books written about 1910.
2. She had come in first in a major boat race competing with boys.
3. She had a great familiarity with strange flying machines.
4. At least once she laughed at danger when a box with a dynamite label was inadvertently used to send her a gift, while her parents had pushed the panic button.
5. She had a real prig for a boy friend.
6. Her father had declared her boyfriend a persona-non-grata, and that's when she split.

All this was gleaned from a sea lawyer friend of Uncle Bill's who was present at the court martial when G-8, still raving about the rip-off, instigated charges against Battle Ace #13 (Nippy Weston). Battle Ace #7 (Bull Martin) transferred to the S.E.F. 118th Mess Gear Reclamation Unit



in disgust, after purposefully falling against Nippy and through Braille found Weston to either be a well stacked broad or a nut who toted grapefruits in the folds of a loosely hung tunic.

In 1969 Berkley came out with G-8 reprints and I purchased THE BAT STAFFEL along with a six pack of Hamm's beer. Upon reaching page 44, memories of what Uncle Bill had told me flooded my mind and I wanted the fun of finding out who was Nippy Weston, the gal flyer that foisted the sham on Army brass. Consider these facts: At the overly crowded base at Colomby Les Belles, Nippy had private quarters and luxury shades, an unheard of treatment for a 2nd lieutenant. Besides, what was Nippy hiding when the shades were drawn??? Before page 44 in the first novel, I found that Nippy didn't talk; he (or she) chirps. Nippy's slender build was feminine and if you look at the bottom of page 41, Nippy packs a purse!!! What else could that small leather bag be?? Mae West's favorite expression was "Big Boy" in the 30s. I can't imagine a rugged male flyer constantly using this phrase as Nippy does. Frankly, Hogan was laughing at his readers and gave a few sharpies—bits of tantalizing clues, knowing that G-8 gave Nippy a bitter farewell after the hushed up court martial. Even as late as 1937 in the saga of the FLIGHT OF THE GREEN ASSASSIN G-8 speaks (on page 109) about Bull Martin recently dropping in for a few days, without Nippy, and says of Bull, "He's the same old two-fisted 'Guy' as always." Evidently G-8 was still ragged off, as in the same place he vehemently denies any name changes with the Battle Aces, so evidently, he was sworn to secrecy about Nippy's alter ego.

Reading this only whetted my appetite and the challenge became greater. I remembered now that Uncle Bill had given me Nippy's female first name, but for the life of me I couldn't recall it. I went through a few of the pulps I had looking for leads and though I found many references to Nippy's gender, the juvenile series Uncle Bill mentioned were elusive. In HORDE OF THE WINGLESS DEATH, page 60, Nippy panics at the thought of exposure in G-8's company as some death dealing spikes ripped his pants and he drops from sight below the drum to mend them, when all the time their lives are periled. "It's unreal!!!"

PATROL OF THE PURPLE CLAN has one of the best insights, as on page 8 Nippy shows a strong lack of interest in a girl who has phoned. Now very few red blooded males in the A.E.F. would pass up a girl who was unknown or unseen but Nippy states, "I suppose I got to tell her not to bother me!" Also, as Nippy languidly got out of his chair, he was looking for sympathy by putting on a sorrowful and weary look. That whole bit of rhetoric is certainly feminine.

Setting the aforementioned clues down on paper, it was evident that I must explore the field of juvenile literature. So, I started to collect girls book series. Ruth Fielding was not only a bore but she was so straight laced, her front line adventures were a put-on. Her books and Kay Tracey's are so prissy that I wondered if the girls who read about their prim existence and sexless lives ever became heavy with child; it was a "no no." Nan Sherwood was a bit looser and did study the German language at Lakeview for four years so she fit some of the prerequisites G-8 wanted, as stated in the BAT STAFFEL. However, none of the clues fit. Dainty Dorothy, Campfire Girls, Pollyanna and the others would have fainted at the thought of racing motorboats so that eliminated them. I skimmed through and collected many girls books, but all to no avail; not a hint in a carload. And then! I remembered the first name—MARY. OK. Now for her winner of a boyfriend—so I started on the boys series from 1910 to 1916. Tom Slade had a girlfriend named Mary Temple, but she belonged to the 400 and was only slumming when she appeared to Tom as a girl

with true grit. Actually, she was putting him on and grinned to herself as she intentionally embarrassed him with his lack of culture. The bird boys, radio boys, dreadnaught boys, all became part of my collection, and after reading about how some of our youth advised Joffre and Pershing I wondered what the American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.) was doing there.

Then I received a letter from the T. Swift Boat and Engine Works up in New York State. The Motor Boat *Arrow* from the Tom Swift series was embossed on the letterhead and this was a real clue. I had detested these mundane books as a lad, mainly because I couldn't feel part of the books. Tom Swift, to me, was a rich snob and a prig whom no one on my peerage level could take too seriously or could identify with. The Anglo Saxon Presbyterians, living up on the hill, bought the books in droves. But then their Dads belonged to the elite River Heights Improvement Association and associated not with the people who lived on the flats. I had no trouble purchasing twelve Swifts at a local White Elephant shop—all without dust jackets and 50¢ each. Poring through TOM SWIFT AND HIS MOTOR BOAT (1910) I found that Mary Nestor was a B.T.O. in a motor boat who had crossed the winning line a full boat's length ahead of her nearest competitor, beating out several confident lads who had better boats. Then shades of Weston when in TOM SWIFT AND HIS BIG TUNNEL, Chapter VI, Eradicate sent Mary a gift from Tom in a dynamite labeled box that frightened everyone but cool and level-headed Mary. Also, in the same book we find Mr. Nestor giving Tom the status of a persona non grata. Evidently it was there that Mary split and became the famous battle ace. We know she had many dealings with weird machines because of her winner (?) of a boyfriend who, by the way, was a lousy pilot—look at the frontispiece of TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIRSHIP.

Appleton (Garis) took umbrage at Mary's desertion to the Army and never again did she win a boat race or sneer at a dynamite label. As a matter of fact he made her out to be an Elsie Dinsmore or, even worse, a simpering Honey-bunch. It was sort of revenge even though he kept her in the series.

As I am still in the process of this search in due time I am sure that Mary Nestor will survive the degeneration given her in the series starting with TOM SWIFT AND HIS AIR SCOUT where she sweetly says to Tom with a shy look, "It's moonlight in the garden, let us go out to a bench and sit down and talk a while." No longer an adventuress she, except as a vamp, which I am really not knocking. There are those disbelievers who will disclaim Mary Nestor as Nippy's alter ego, but, having read this far, will never feel the same as they peruse those pulps and see the many hints or even photos of Nippy that surely show a feminine approach; and, in some of Nippy's drawings, it isn't too far fetched to see a full bosom.

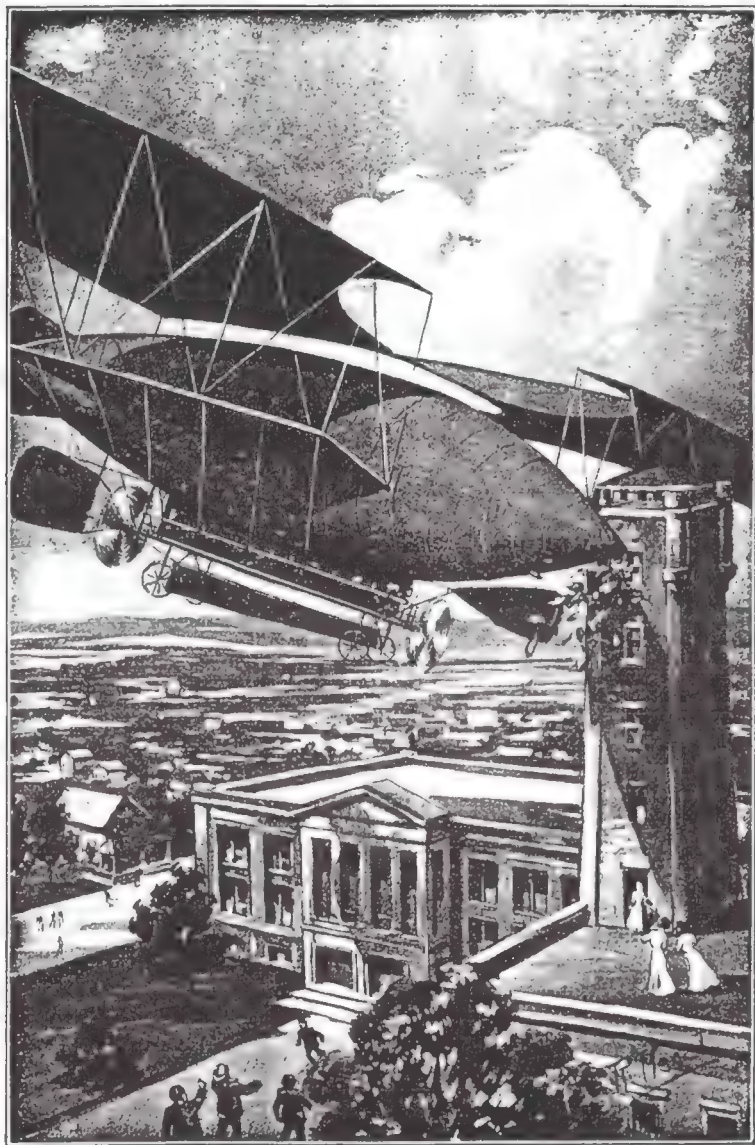
Napoleon, Hastings, Grant, all had their females impersonating men, with great honor, gusto and courage. It's too bad that G-8 didn't take a rational look at this woman—she was born 30 years too soon.

FINIS

But it was not finis. John sent a copy of his research to the T. Swift Boat and Engine Works and shortly received this startling reply:  
Dear John,

Your scholarship overwhelms me! Egad, man. Incredible as it seems at first glance you just have to be right. I have spent the afternoon and evening reading Tom Swift and his miraculous happenings and verifying your hypothesis, but more importantly, re-reading Tom Swift, Jr., as well. You have missed a most important argument, eugenics. If Nippy Weston was a female indeed and Mary Nestor in particular, then the union of such a





STRAIGHT AT THE TOWER RUSHED THE RED CLOUD, AND HIT  
IT A GLANCING BLOW.

*Tom Swift and His Airship*

*Page 53.*

woman (could we call her a lady?) and my favorite hero Tom Swift the 1st should have produced offspring of unusual characteristics. And look at the results!

Tom Swift, Jr., is even more fearless than his dad. Look at his activities. TOM SWIFT AND HIS FLYING LAB, AND HIS OUTPOST IN SPACE, AND HIS ROCKET SHIP, AND HIS TRIPHIBIAN ATOMICAR, as examples. He gets his engineering ability from his Dad and his fearless enthusiasm and drive from his mother. How many mothers would let their 18 year old sons drive a rocket to the Moon, excavate into the bowels of the Earth, and dive to the bottom of the ocean with hardly a word of protest. Nippy Weston would. And here is a clincher. Tom has a sister Sandy who is shown to be much more of an athlete than Mary Nestor was generally permitted to be. We know how devious Howard Garis could be as shown in his repositioning Lake Carlpa and changing its size at various times as well as by his general ambiguity when he was hiding something. Sandy's biographer is much more direct. Sandy is a good horsewoman, a good general athlete, and flies the Swift's planes for prospective customers. If she isn't a chip off the old Nippy block I'll swallow my gum. It all hangs together. One final rivet in the testimony. It took Tom and Mary 32 books to get married. Why did it take so long? Because Mary was out of town so long posing as Nippy Weston that Tom didn't have a chance? I would even propose that as slow as Tom was, at least with girls, Mary became Nippy Weston out of sheer boredom. A little war was a welcome improvement over Tom's wooing.

As I said, I admire your research and only hope these words will help you buttress your arguments.

Victor Appleton IV $\frac{1}{2}$   
Shopton, NY 13502  
February 10, 1975

These are startling findings and need careful examination. John Sullivan is now gone and Victor Appleton IV $\frac{1}{2}$  is reported suffering from senility. It seems important to me that through the wide distribution of *Dime Novel Roundup* to scholarly researchers into many areas of popular culture as well as to serious collectors and readers in the field this material should reach a new and larger audience. It may open up a whole new field of research.

\* \* \* \* \*

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|----|--|-------------|--------|
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